

I conclude by reiterating Secretary Albright's remarks that Cyprus is a valued partner in the fight against the new global threats of proliferation, terrorism, illegal narcotics, and international crime. Cyprus and the United States share common values and are committed to building a world based on open markets, democratic principles and the rule of law. These ties demand that the United States continue to work towards assisting the two Cypriot communities in reaching a just and secure peace.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1031

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1031.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2169, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

Mrs. MYRICK (during the special order of Mr. BILIRAKIS), from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-189) on the bill resolution (H. Res. 189) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2169) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

A MESSY DAY IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, it has been a messy day here in the House of Representatives. Today is July 17. We are certainly midway through the work of this first year of the 105th Congress, and it was most unfortunate that we started the day by pulling a bill which would have reauthorized vocational education assistance, and stopped the forward movement of that bill because there was an amendment on the bill which called for a retention of provisions in the bill which would have encouraged local governments and local education agencies to continue to emphasize vocational-technical education for women.

It was most unfortunate that with the overwhelming support that that amendment seemed to have, which merely wanted to continue what was going on already, that it led to the majority suddenly pulling the bill from the floor and refusing to let the House

work its will on a bill which would have provided fair treatment for women in vocational education and technical education programs. In an era when technical education is very much in order, and women certainly can do as well as men in some of the high tech areas that offer the most opportunities for the future, the highest pay, we are not willing to have our own Vocational Education Assistance Act reflect the fact that we want maximum opportunities for women.

So that was an unfortunate start of the day. It has been an unfortunate week in that same manner.

Two days ago we refused to allow the House to work its will on a vote, up or down, on the National Endowment for the Arts. The National Endowment for the Arts seems to upset a small band of Members in the House of Representatives. They insist on harassing and pursuing the National Endowment for the Arts, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of the American people support the National Endowment for the Arts and support the National Endowment for the Humanities, overwhelmingly.

And the Members of Congress, if given a chance to vote yes or no on the funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, would certainly keep its funding at the present level. We were not allowed to do that. This is a week that the majority chose to use its overwhelming powers, because it is the majority, to manipulate the process, and by one vote we lost on a procedural vote that would have given us the opportunity to vote up or down on that important matter.

Later on today we also experienced the intense annoyance and anger of the minority, the Democrats in the minority of the House, because in the agricultural appropriations bill that was about to come up, the same kind of treatment we had received in some other bills this year and in the NEA vote was being manifested. The ranking member of the agriculture subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, the ranking Democrat was not allowed by the Committee on Rules to present an amendment that she had requested.

The power of the majority is certainly great enough to stop on this floor most of what they want to stop and to promote and push what they want to push, past it, but we ought to at least have the opportunity to go on record on certain votes, and we are being denied that. So we had a very messy end to the day, at a point where really we do not have much time left before we adjourn on August 1st.

We are moving to pass appropriations bills. Appropriations bills are most important bills, probably, that we pass, in that they are the ones that provide the funding to keep our government activities going, and we are going to be rushing through those things in the next 10 working days of Congress.

We also have in the background negotiations going on which are very im-

portant, vitally important negotiations on the expenditure plan that was passed by both Houses, negotiations on the tax package. That is ongoing.

We know that those important processes are in the works, and worry about the fact that we are going to be pushed against the wall and stampeded at the last minute on those packages if we do not change the way this House operates. The majority does not, again, respect the will of the minority.

There is another problem also beyond the procedural questions, and that is, I lament the fact and a number of my colleagues lament the fact that the tax and expenditure package, the appropriations bills, as they come up are zeroing out or refusing to even discuss and consider certain important matters that ought to be on the agenda. In this 105th Congress, when we enter a situation where we started out with a lot of talk about bipartisan cooperation, especially in the area of education, I suppose one of the most disappointing absences is the fact that the education initiatives that have been proposed have been watered down so and some are not even on the agenda.

The most important, disappointing absence, in my opinion, is the one related to the school construction initiative. That is not even in the tax package or the expenditure plan which the President and the two Houses are negotiating now. We are grateful for the fact that the President at least has kept the school construction initiative alive by listing it among his priorities. The trouble is that the President has a long, long list of priorities, and we wonder how high on the list the school construction initiative will be.

We also wonder about the fact that the empowerment zones which mean so much to our urban areas, since nothing else has been offered in the last 10 years to deal with very pressing problems in our urban areas, the empowerment zones were considered to be a reasonable answer because both parties would support it since it was a combination of the private sector, the government sector and there was a lot of talk about this is the way of the future, but empowerment zones are not in the package either at this point, except for the President's priority list.

So I guess we will have to be grateful for the President at least keeping these things in the discussion. They are not in the House bill or the Senate bill. Therefore, they would not be on the conference table. So the fact that the President has tax incentives for school construction on the list of items for his tax cut proposals, and he has deductions for K through 12 computer donations on his list, and he has brownfields empowerment zones and enterprise zones, expansion of these in his package, we are grateful for that. We are holding on by a thread.

These are very important matters and I think to shift to the most important area, that is the area of education, not only the most important but the